

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP — IN — KING COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ANNUAL REPORT 2000

MISSION STATEMENT

Be the steward of the region's environment by protecting our water, land and natural habitats, supporting sustainable communities, and safely disposing of and reusing wastewater and solid wastes.



KING COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE



It is with great pleasure that I introduce *Environmental Stewardship in King County*, the 2000 Annual Report of the Department of Natural Resources.

Many basic services provided in DNR protect our citizens' health and safety while also protecting our environment. As King County faces tough budget choices to fund other vital services countywide, we are fortunate that dedicated fees for services fund most of the work in DNR for such things as cleaning wastewater, flood control, disposing of solid waste and protecting water quality in rivers, lakes and Puget Sound.

Our role as caretakers of the King County natural environment for the benefit of all who live here is one of our biggest responsibilities as a local government. That's why King County launched in May 2000 the Earth Legacy Initiative, which celebrates the importance of protecting and enhancing our natural environment. The Initiative highlights County programs that maintain the environmental integrity of our region, as well as our high quality of life. Many of the Earth Legacy programs are found in DNR.



As King County Executive, I have worked to make the environment a top priority for my administration. I commend the Department of Natural Resources staff as they fulfill their mission to protect and preserve land and water quality while also dedicating themselves to new efficiencies and streamlining their organization. The level of success we achieve in ensuring that the needs of our growing population and economy don't come at the expense of our natural resources will be one of our most important lasting legacies.

Sincerely,

Ron Sims,
King County Executive

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



The year 2000 was one of major accomplishments for the King County Department of Natural Resources as we met the challenge of providing regional environmental services that protect public health and the environment while moving forward on major regional initiatives. We began work on a new regional wastewater facility, completed a draft plan for future disposal of the region's solid waste, expanded our storm water drainage services and entered into new partnerships with local governments so we can continue the work of recovering salmon under the rules of the Endangered Species Act.

All of this was done with an eye on providing the highest quality professional services and the best value for our citizens' dollars. One indicator that we are succeeding in our work is the nearly 30 awards we won in 2000, which you'll find in this report. Many of the awards are from peer groups that understand the challenges of the public sector and recognize excellence in the specialized fields in which we work.

The next few years will be a time of transformation for the Department of Natural Resources as we continue our work as a high performance environmental services agency during a time of population growth, tightening budgets and skyrocketing energy costs. We are committed to meeting these challenges on behalf of the citizens we serve. At the same time, we will continue our efforts to increase efficiencies with major initiatives that we started in 2000 in our Wastewater Treatment, Solid Waste, and Water and Land Resources divisions. We will find creative new approaches to meeting our mission of protecting and restoring our natural resources, turning waste into usable resources and working in partnerships to deliver the best work possible for our citizens.

This coming year we will narrow down the possible sites for our new wastewater plant, deliver expanded storm water management services to Vashon Island and two-thirds of eastern King County, finalize our Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan, launch new water reuse and conservation pilot projects, and continue the tough job of recovering salmon under the Endangered Species Act.

It is a pleasure to serve the citizens of King County and to work with such a professional and dedicated staff as those who work for this department.

Sincerely,

Pam Bissonnette,
Director, Department of Natural Resources

INTRODUCTION

Consider, for a moment, the incredible natural environment in which King County citizens work and play – 760 lakes and reservoirs, 3,000 miles of streams, 800,000 acres of forestland, 975 wetlands, and four major river systems.

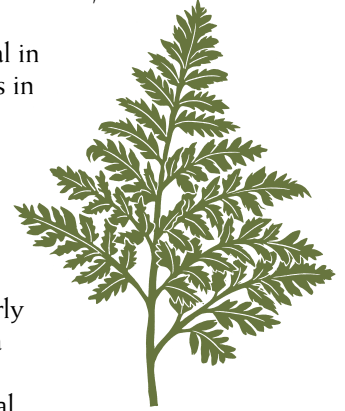
These amazing natural resources – the fish and wildlife, marine beaches, spectacular waterfalls, and forested mountains – are a basic reason so many people choose to live here. Now approaching two million people, King County is the 12th most populated county in the United States. Another 1.2 million people are forecast to arrive in the next 30 years, which will place enormous pressure on the county's rich, but fragile, natural environment.

This growth also creates an enormous challenge for the wise and responsible stewardship of these lands and waters. As you will see in the many accomplishments outlined in the 2000 Annual Report, not only is the King County Department of Natural Resources successfully meeting the difficult challenges of today, but laying solid foundations for future growth. With conscientious natural resource stewardship as a backdrop, the department worked diligently in 2000 to protect human health and safety by improving and expanding infrastructure for wastewater treatment, solid waste collection and flood protection.

Under the leadership of King County Executive Ron Sims, the department was instrumental in building partnerships between the County and nearly three dozen jurisdictions and stakeholders in innovative agreements to recover threatened salmon. The department also launched innovative productivity and competitiveness initiatives to ensure operations become leaner and more efficient. Department staff were knee-deep in literally hundreds of on-the-ground projects to protect and restore fish habitat, improve water quality, recruit and train volunteers, expand facilities, protect citizens from flooding, promote conservation and recycling, reuse wastewater and solid waste, and much more.

The quality of the department's facilities, programs and services was distinguished with nearly 30 regional and national awards in 2000 as King County continued to solidify its reputation as a highly effective regional environmental management agency.

Environmental Stewardship in King County, the 2000 Annual Report for the Department of Natural Resources, provides a snapshot of what the three department divisions – Water and Land Resources, Wastewater Treatment and Solid Waste – are doing today, and will do tomorrow, to protect our natural environment for the benefit of the citizens of King County.



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS

- ◆ **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY:** Achieve a net gain in environmental quality by protecting and restoring the natural environment, ensuring public health and safety, and exceeding environmental standards.
- ◆ **WASTE TO RESOURCE:** Regard the region's waste products as resources and minimize the amount of residual waste disposed.
- ◆ **PRICE OF SERVICE:** Price our services reasonably and competitively, while delivering the highest value to our citizens and maintaining safe and reliable systems.
- ◆ **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:** Meet the needs of our customers and our natural environment through valued, high quality and responsive services.
- ◆ **EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND MORALE:** Be a forward thinking workforce where employees are engaged in our business, involved in decisions that affect them, and understand their role in achieving the DNR vision.
- ◆ **ORGANIZATION:** Be a high performance regional environmental management agency by providing high quality services, working in partnerships, and leading by example.